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The past two months at the School have contrasted sharply with the quiet post-Christmas season. Suddenly things began to happen, and the calm of a few weeks of study was transformed into furious activity.

One cause of activity was Easter, which, since it came early this year, found Jerusalem still rather cold. As thousands of tourists and pilgrims swarmed the Holy City, the School was also playing host to many. In late February Dean G. McKee and Mrs. McKee arrived for a 'three months' stay; Dr. McKee, former President of Biblical Seminary in New York, will take up a new post as Professor of Bible at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, next fall. In March, Dr. Norman W. Paullin of Eastern Baptist Seminary in Philadelphia arrived for a long visit; and Dr. and Mrs. Clarence Downing of Redlands, California, have been with us for some time. Dr. Downing is University Pastor at the University of Redlands and Professor of Religion and Humanities. Recent arrivals are Ivan Kaufman, who was a student at the School in 1953-54; Alfred J. Hoerth, who is in the Near East on a travelling fellowship from the Oriental Institute, and Dr. Klaus Brisch of the German Institute in Cairo. Dr. and Mrs. T. Cuyler Young of Princeton stopped in briefly on their way through to Tehran; and many other guests have been briefly within our walls.

Most of us participated in the colorful and often moving ceremonies of Easter; and the routine of the School was often disturbed by the ever changing schedules of religious ceremonies. To believer and unbeliever alike, there is something strangely moving in this persistence of rites and traditions throughout the checkered history of Jerusalem. To the historian, each and all of them has something to teach about the past and the infinite variety of human expression of thought and belief.

One of the major activities of the School was the beginning of Paul Lapp's excavations at Arak al-Amir. From the time that the first count of blankets and towels took place to the moment that the School car, loaded like ten donkeys, departed for the seclusion of Wadi Sir, there was a great stir at the School and enthusiasm and excitement over things to come. As to what happened during the opening week of work, here is a first report from Dr. Lapp:

FIRST TWO WEEKS AT ARAQ EL-EMIR

The results of the first half of the four-week ASOR spring sounding at Araq el-Emir contrast sharply with what was anticipated. Two squares were opened at the NW edge of the village of Araq where there is a rather large field available for clearance with outlines of several structures appearing at the surface. It was hoped that this site might offer Persian and Early Hellenistic remains, and such ruins might still be uncovered, but so far two distinct Roman strata have been unearthed in both squares. The present surface corresponds

1960-61

approximately with the floor level of a Late Roman occupation of the late second or third century A.D. The surface pottery is surprisingly homogeneous, and though the absolute ceramic chronology of this period is not fixed precisely, the suggested date cannot be far wrong. A Byzantine pit dug into one of the squares provides a striking contrast in ceramic typology. The walls, including a door socket in situ, can probably be attributed to domestic occupation by virtue of the oven, bones, and other artifactual evidence recovered.

Below the surface is a thick layer of loose brown earth which contained sherds from the same horizon as the surface and is to be interpreted as a fill for the Late Roman occupation. This fill overlies an Early Roman occupation layer of the late first or early second century A.D. In both squares well-made doorways with thresholds at the occupation level were cleared. Some walls were founded at this level, while others go down considerably further and belong to an occupation yet to be unearthed.

So the Araq sounding instead of securing evidence for determining ceramic chronology between Iron II and Late Hellenistic offers the possibility of extending the writer's ceramic chronology for Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Palestine into the second and third centuries A.D.

Evidence for the fourth and fifth centuries, and possibly later, comes from the Qasr, the second and main field of operations in the sounding. Here we have been digging in four squares, two inside and two outside the Qasr. It was hoped that it would be a simple matter to determine the stratification against the East Wall of the Qasr and its construction date--if large fallen stones did not make the work impossible. The stones did not prove an insurmountable problem for our foreman and his ten-ton jack. But instead of finding a clear foundation trench, two meters of nearly sterile earth were excavated to lay bare the "foundation course" of the building in the squares outside the Qasr at the north and south ends of the building. The few sherds from these squares were either Herodian or Early Byzantine, and walls and an oven have appeared at the level of the bottom of the "foundation course" indicating that this course was exposed in Byzantine times. It also seems that the quake which toppled the building occurred subsequent to this Byzantine occupation, for large stone blocks from the Qasr lie directly above these installations. Possibly the Qasr was destroyed by the same quake that was responsible for the collapse of the Areopolis walls at Kerak in A.D. 365.

The settlement inside the Qasr, on the other hand, seems to belong to the post-quake phase, although from sherds this occupation still belongs to the Byzantine period. Inside the line of the "Arab" wall in Butler's plan have emerged two walls of a room of undetermined (probably domestic) character. The pottery above and below the floor 1.75 m. below the top of the preserved walls (= present surface) is exclusively Byzantine. The stones in the walls seem to be carefully hewn from the large stones of the original west wall of the Qasr. These stones were found nearly filling the first square excavated. They are very poorly placed in the exposed walls accompanied by small

stones and unhewn larger ones, suggesting that there was possibly an earlier phase in which the well-hewn stones were nicely put together. In any case, the Byzantine people's use of the Qasr is much more extensive than anyone has suspected, and now to the problem of the date and character of the Qasr is added the problem of the nature of the Byzantine settlement.

Our field supervisors have been School Fellows Herbert Huffman and James Zink, Professor A. von R. Sauer of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., Professor Norman W. Paullin of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and Dr. John Zimmerman, long-time ASOR member currently American Chaplain at St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem. Mrs. Herbert Huffman is in charge of object registration, Mr. James Sauer of pottery registration, and Mrs. James Zink has assisted with object and section drawing. Muhammed Abu Salah has been our representative from the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Muhammed, Jerusalem School assistant cook, has kept up our spirits with excellent meals, and Mr. Mustafa Taufiq of Balatah has admirably handled all land and personnel problems.

The undersigned wants to thank the ASOR, Director Grabar of the Jerusalem School, Dr. Awni Dajani of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, and the entire dig staff for making this sounding so far a very enjoyable undertaking. Despite a muddy beginning after the last (we hope) rain and many hot days, we have all been cheered by the striking beauty of our environs, the multicolored carpets of wildflowers everywhere, and by the kindness and hospitality of our semi-agricultural hosts (who have already provided us with two mensifs).

PAUL LAPP

Another set of School activities has centered around the Director's own work. After the completion of the photographing of the mosaics of the Aqsa mosque and of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and after a short trip to Egypt, the Director left for Beirut, partly on School business, and for several weeks in Iran. In a previous Newsletter some years ago, it was mentioned how important Iranian archaeology is to the Near East as a whole and how useful some first-hand knowledge of Iran is to specialists in the Fertile Crescent. The point is all the more valid when one considers the Islamic period; for, at that period, the Muslim unification of the whole Near East increased the contacts between the Arab and Persian worlds, and many a monument of Jerusalem is not fully understandable without knowledge of and reference to the traditions of Iran. The trip itself was most successful, even though too many feasts intervened, at times disrupting the proper arrangement of visits. A week in Tehran was devoted mostly to the Museum and to a few monuments in the neighborhood of the capital. Eight days in Isfahan were far from enough to investigate the Seljuq and Safavid monuments of that extraordinary town and to visit all the mediaeval sites within comparatively easy reach of the city. It was fascinating to note the great difference in town planning between Iranian and Mediterranean cities, the former extending over vast spaces with successive regimes or dynasties building their towns alongside the older towns, the latter clustered around immovable citadels and holy places; the former with their endless brick

Page 47-
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walls surrounding hidden gardens and houses, the latter compactly set in stone. But the most striking aspect of Isfahan and of the several cities within a radius of some 200 kilometers was the unequalled splendor of the royal monuments, the great Seljuq mosques with their mastery of brick, the colorful and majestic Safavid mosques, and finally the very rare treasures of Islamic secular art that are the Ali Qapu, the Chekel Sutun and the bridges of Isfahan. No visit to Iran is possible without a few days at Shiraz, Persepolis, and the Naqsh-e Rostam. While the rain made parts of the trip a bit muddy, it was difficult not to be impressed by the somewhat cold grandeur of Achaemenid art, by the iconographic wealth of Sassanian reliefs, and by the proverbial poetry of Shirazi gardens.

Then, during the week of April 17, a six-day trip by the Director, accompanied by Dr. Brisch, Miss Lucy Scholten of the University of Leyden, and Mr. Adil Ayyash of the Department of Antiquities, explored the area between Qasr Hallabat to the North, Bayir to the Southeast, and the Hijaz railway to the West. Most of the sites visited had been seen before by travelers, but not all had been fully described. The significance of the trip was to raise anew, and to answer some of the problems of the desert described in a previous Newsletter. A more complete answer will have to await the results of two more such trips planned for the weeks to come. To this I will return later. In the meantime it is as usual a pleasure, shared I am sure by all School alumni of desert trips, to acknowledge the unfailing courtesy and repeated kindness of the Beduin police, one of the most helpful group of men in the Near East.

Finally, news from the School would not be complete without mention of the arrival in Jerusalem of the University of Michigan Symphonic Band, whose 100-odd members gave here their 51st concert in some ten weeks. They were well received, and the School played host to a huge cocktail party in their honor, with Omar once more showing his undisputed talents as a creator of gastronomic delicacies.

Oleg Grabar
Director, Jerusalem School